

Warning

This fact sheet aims to let you know the side effects most commonly seen following the administration of your treatment. Please note that when you take any medication, there is a possibility that it causes rare side effects and it is difficult to predict which patients will be affected.

General information for patient Azacitidine (Vidaza^{md})

Comité des pharmaciens, CEPO

Date: June 15th 2012

Revision date:

Medication	Administration
Azacitidine (Vidaza ^{MD})	Subcutaneous injection once a day for 7 days
<i>Cycle repeated every 4 weeks</i>	

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General information associated with your treatment

- › Azacitidine is used to prevent multiplication of abnormal cells and destroy them.
- › A **blood test** will be done prior to every treatment cycle. Depending on the results and side effects of the previous treatment, the dose of the medication might be adjusted or the treatment might be delayed.
- › You may experience **fatigue** during your treatments. This is usually only temporary and may be related to different reasons (medication, stress, the disease) Maintain a good level of activity but rest when you feel the need to.
- › Your **appetite may diminish**. Eat more often, in smaller quantities.
- › Your **sense of taste may be altered**. Enhance foods with fine herbs or lemon juice. Eating fruits, chewing non-sugared gums, etc may mask the metallic taste.
- › Consumption of **alcohol** (in small quantities) is permitted and will not affect the efficacy of the treatments.
- › You can have an **active sexual** life during your treatments. However, a decrease in your sexual drive may occur during this period. This may also be influenced by different factors (fatigue, stress etc.).
- › For **male patients**, the sperm count may be affected and have a negative effect on the embryo. In fact, the production of spermatozooids may be reduced or completely absent during treatments. In certain patients, this reduction of fertility may be permanent, may get better or return to normal after the treatments have stopped. This reduction of **fertility** does not prevent erection or sexual activity.
- › For the **pre-menopausal female patients**, chemotherapy may cause irregularities or cessation of the menstrual cycle during treatments. The menstrual cycle, after stopping chemotherapy, may restart or return to normal. The menstrual cycle may also stop permanently. However, a pregnancy may be possible and a method of **contraception** is strongly recommended during treatments. Chemotherapy administered during pregnancy may harm the embryo. Breast-feeding is contra-indicated during treatment.
- › Consult your doctor or pharmacist before you take other medications (even over the counter medications available without a prescription) or natural products. These may provoke an interaction with your treatment and diminish its efficacy.

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Averse effects and management

Adverse effects	Management
Moderate nausea and vomiting may occur mainly on the same day and the day following your treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› You will be prescribed medication to prevent nausea to be taken prior to treatment. After the treatment, at home, you will take medication as needed for 1 or 2 days, or more, depending on your reaction.› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team if you have nausea or vomiting that is not relieved by medication.
Depending on the individual, thinning of the hair may occur. In general, this happens 2 to 3 weeks after the start of the treatment. However, don't worry; your hair will grow back after treatments have ended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Use gentle shampoo.› Avoid brushing hair vigorously.› Avoid hair spray, dyes and perms.
A decrease in the white blood cells will occur about 2 weeks following treatment. You may be at higher risk to contract infections during this period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Wash your hands often.› During this period, avoid coming in contact with people who have contagious diseases.› Contact a member of your healthcare team quickly if you notice any signs of infection (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, pain while you urinate, etc.).› Consult your doctor or go immediately to the Emergency Department if you have a fever of 38.3°C (101°F) once or 38°C (100.4°F) twice one hour apart.
A decrease in platelets will occur about 2 weeks following treatment. You may bruise or bleed more easily than you normally do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Use a tooth brush with soft bristles.› Check with your pharmacist before taking medications with Aspirin®, Ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory drugs.› Contact a member of your healthcare team if you bruise more easily than you normally do or if you have a tendency to bleed easily from the nose or the gums.
You may experience a decrease of red blood cells following your treatment. This phenomenon is called anemia and is characterised by signs of fatigue, pale color, dizziness and shortness of breath.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Keep active but respect signs of fatigue your body gives you; rest when you feel the need to.› If you notice one or any of these effects, contact a member of your healthcare team.

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You may experience constipation .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Exercise if possible.› Drink lots of fluids (at least 8 glasses a day).› Communicate with a member of your healthcare team who, if necessary, will prescribe the appropriate laxatives.
You may sometimes experience diarrhea , which may start approximately 5-8 days after the start of treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Drink lots of liquids (unless otherwise instructed by your doctor).› Please contact a member of your healthcare team if you have significant diarrhea (more than 3 loose stools per day) for more than 24 hours.
During your treatment, you may experience some pain, irritation, swelling or a burning sensation at the injection site .	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Apply cold or lukewarm compresses on the injection site for 15 to 20 minutes a few times a day.› If you notice one or more of these effects and if they persist despite applying compresses, contact a member of your healthcare team.

Pharmacist: _____

Phone: _____

From ____ h to ____ h (Monday to Friday)